

AGENDA



Thursday, May 24, 2007

Item(s) to Set Public Hearing(s)
RECOMMENDATION FOR COUNCIL ACTION
Item No. 32

Subject: Set a public hearing to consider an ordinance amending Chapter 25-1, Subchapter E of Chapter 25-2, and Chapter 25-4 of the City Code relating to parkland dedication, and establishing the parkland cost for each dwelling unit.

Amount and Source of Funding: There is no unanticipated fiscal impact. A fiscal note is not required.

For More Information: Ricardo Soliz, Division Manager, 974 6765

Boards and Commission Action: Recommended with minor revisions by the Parks and Recreation Board; Downtown Commission; and, the Design Commission. To be reviewed by the Planning Commission on May 22, 2007. (Suggested date and time: June 7, 2007 at 6:00 p.m., Austin City Hall, 301 W. Second Street, Austin, TX)

Prior Council Action: On May 3, 2007, Council approved a resolution requesting the Planning Commission to make and forward a recommendation concerning amendments to Title 25 of the City Code concerning the dedication of Parkland at its meeting on May, 22, 2007.

The Parks & Recreation Department (PARD) is recommending amendments to the parkland dedication provisions of the City Code to achieve two goals: eliminate the selective application of the ordinance, and establish a uniform payment amount.

Population growth generates new users of the park system, and the parkland dedication provisions require new developments to share in the cost of growth. Today the code requires new residential developments to dedicate parkland or to pay money instead of dedicating parkland, in order to help meet the recreational needs of new residents. But the parkland dedication provisions are in the subdivision chapter of the Land Development Code, so the provisions apply only if land is being subdivided. If the development can occur on a legal lot, there may be no subdivision requirement and no parkland dedication or payment required. PARD recommends that the parkland dedication requirement should apply to any new residential development, regardless of the need to subdivide. There would be two options to comply: a project needing a subdivision would comply with parkland requirements at the subdivision stage, or a project that requires a site plan would comply when a site plan is filed.

The second goal is a uniform payment amount. The parkland dedication assessment is proportional to the number of new residents in the development. PARD has the option to accept dedication of parkland calculated for the specific development, or a payment equal to the value of the land. If the land available is unsuitable for a park or it duplicates a nearby park, PARD generally selects the payment option. The money is used to buy suitable land or improve nearby parks that benefit the new residents. But land values, and payment levels, may vary widely from project to project. The discrepancy in the amount paid is especially noticeable with high downtown land values. PARD recommends moving away from a variable payment based on land value and, instead, adopting a uniform payment based on the number of new residents. A standard payment of \$650 per residential unit is proposed in the ordinance.